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Attitudes to education and educational pathway preferences in the Czech Republic

The importance of education and its prestige has grown as a result of the socio-economic changes after 1989. However, the Czech population still attributes less importance to education as a success factor for life compared to more developed countries. Still, young people strive for as high a level of education as possible, the primary incentive being expected financial gain. The characteristic features of the Czech population include a high occurrence of ISCED 3 qualification, a low proportion of the labour force with basic education (ISCED 1, 2) and with no education (ISCED 0) and a low proportion of individuals with tertiary qualifications (ISCED 5, 6). The 1990s saw a sharp reduction in the number of secondary vocational school students and an increase in participation in secondary programmes with 'maturita' and in tertiary education. A further development of tertiary education is hindered by insufficient capacity in higher education institutions. The CR also shows a very low level of upward educational mobility. Participation in continuing education is lower compared to the EU and there is weak motivation particularly among individuals with lower qualifications.

Introduction

As in other post-communist countries, the socio-economic changes in the Czech Republic (CR) induced differentiation in society and remuneration for work. The economic and social prestige of education has increased and the attitudes of the young and their parents to education have changed. The choice of educational pathway is now being strongly influenced by the desire of parents for their children to acquire higher qualifications.

In order to understand the attitudes of the Czech population, it is important to know its current educational attainment and the former factors underlying it. The economically active population of the CR is characterised by a high proportion of individuals with upper secondary education (nearly 44 % have ISCED 3 without 'maturita' and over 35 % have ISCED 3 with 'maturita'). Another feature is a low proportion of the labour force with basic or no education (less than 9 % have ISCED 1, 2) and with tertiary education (a mere 12.5 % have ISCED 5, 6).

This situation is a result of the post-war development of education where a major part of the population could acquire vocational qualifications as early as the upper secondary level (ISCED 3). General education at this level (gymnazium) and tertiary education (ISCED 5, 6) was limited and vocational training at secondary level (particularly courses without 'maturita') was promoted. This stifled, to a large degree, the rise in educational attainment of the population.

This article is concerned with the change in attitudes to education in the course of the transformation of the Czech economy and society, with young people's views of the importance of education and with the factors affecting their choice in this respect. It analyses the reasons why the younger generation's efforts to attain high qualifications is not reflected in upward educational mobility and the barriers hindering access to tertiary education in the CR. In view of the importance of lifelong learning, attitudes to continuing education will be analysed, pointing to its being underestimated by the young and adults alike.

Attitudes to education

The long period of social development before 1989, where ideological attitudes were preferred over the actual qualities of an individual, undermined the value of education - both for social prestige and in economic terms (income failed to reflect educational attainment). The value pattern interlinking education, capacities and living standards was severely disrupted (Matějů et al., 1991).

The Czechs' views of the link between education and success in life have changed significantly in the course of the transformation. As ISSP ([1]) studies show, in 1992 less than 31 % of Czechs believed that education is important for an individual to lead a successful life. In 1997 this 'life success' factor was important for almost 61 % of respondents, thus the CR came closer to developed countries with an average ([2]) of 78.8 %. How-

Life success factors in the Czech Republic (CR) and abroad **Table 1**

Success factor	Developed countries*	Post-communist countries**	CR 1992	CR 1997	CR 1999	Development in CR 1992-99		
						1992-97	1997-99	1992-99
Hard work	71.0	65.6	72.7	71.4	72.5	-1.3	1.1	-0.2
Ambition	76.6	63.6	58.4	73.6	62.2	15.2	-11.4	3.8
Aptitudes, talent	57.2	64.0	57.8	70.4	57.1	12.6	-13.3	-0.7
High level of one's own education	78.8	56.9	30.5	60.9	38.3	30.4	-22.6	7.8
Knowing the right people	45.8	54.8	48.2	65.2	48.8	17.0	-16.4	0.6
Political connections	20.2	21.9	12.2	35.2	19.8	23.0	-15.4	7.6
Rich parents	20.5	36.7	14.4	34.5	19.4	20.1	-15.1	5.0
Education of parents	30.1	32.2	9.6	26.0	14.8	16.4	-11.2	5.2
Gender	14.2	16.1	9.3	16.6	11.7	7.3	-4.9	2.4
Political views	10.4	12.3	13.8	14.4	11.4	0.6	-3.0	-2.4
Territory, region	6.9	9.6	7.0	6.4	11.0	-0.6	4.6	4.0
Race, nationality	17.6	9.8	4.4	13.2	9.8	8.8	-3.4	5.4
Religion	7.2	8.1	2.3	2.5	3.1	0.2	0.6	0.8

Source: ISSP, 1992, 1997, 1999.
* Australia, Germany (western *länder*), Great Britain, the USA, Austria, Italy, Norway, Sweden, Canada
** Germany (eastern part), Hungary, Slovakia, Poland, Bulgaria, Russia, Slovenia
Note: sum of the 'very important' and 'essential' answers in percentages.

ever, between 1997 and 1999 the percentage dropped again (37.7 %), the likely reason being exacerbating problems associated with social transformation and the slowing down of wage differentiation in relation to education.

The changes in the perceived importance of education should be viewed in relation to the changes in attitudes of the population during the transformation period. In the first half of the 1990s (1992-97) the respondents, expecting rapid positive effects, tended to stress the importance of many factors, in the later period (1997-99) there was an opposite trend, which was related to the slowdown in transformation dynamics. The overall change in attitudes was therefore less marked than it appeared to be at the outset of the transformation. However, the value attributed to education has increased more than any other factor, although it still lags behind developed countries.

The increased importance attributed to education after 1989 reflects the actual development trends in wage differentiation. The rapid change in wages during this period established good conditions for differentiation of income. During the relatively short period of the first half of the 1990s the differences in pay between qualifications categories of the labour force changed dramatically. The former levelling of income was replaced by remuneration driven by performance, responsibility and qualifications. If before transformation the average pay of a specialist with a university degree was barely 1.5 times higher than that of a worker with basic education, in 1996 the ratio was 2.5 to 1, a ratio common in European countries with a developed market economy.

Large shifts in terms of pay differentiation on the basis of education no longer occur. Nevertheless, the existing differences provide a strong impetus for young people, in particular, to participate and to acquire as high a level of qualifications as possible in initial education.

Current attitudes of young people: the importance of education for an individual

The views of young people aged 20-29 were obtained as part of a study focusing on attitudes to education and a professional career, undertaken in 2003 using a representative sample of 2 500 respondents (Burda et al., 2003).

Of 13 factors, top importance was assigned by the respondents - regardless of their level of education - to ambition. Second came hard work. Only respondents with a university degree attributed the same impor-

([1]) ISSP - International Social Survey programme

([2]) Australia, Germany (western *länder*), Great Britain, the USA, Austria, Italy, Norway, Sweden, Canada

Assessment of factors important for success in life **Table 2**

	The highest level of education achieved (incl. Students)				
	Basic	**Upper secondary without *'maturita'***	**Upper secondary with *'maturita'***	**Tertiary**	**Total**
Be ambitious	2.1	2.1	1.9	1.7	2.0
Be able to work hard	2.1	2.1	2.0	1.9	2.0
Show certain aptitudes or talents	2.2	2.2	2.1	2.1	2.2
Know the right people	2.2	2.2	2.2	2.3	2.2
Have a high level of education	2.5	2.7	2.4	1.9	2.5
Come from a rich family	2.7	2.9	3.0	3.1	3.0
Have parents with a high level of education	3.0	3.2	3.2	3.1	3.2
The area (region) an individual comes from, where he/she grew up	3.3	3.3	3.3	3.4	3.3
Have political connections	3.2	3.4	3.3	3.5	3.3
Gender	3.3	3.3	3.4	3.4	3.4
Race or nationality	3.6	3.6	3.7	3.7	3.7
Political views or convictions	3.6	3.9	3.9	3.9	3.9
Religion	4.2	4.3	4.3	4.3	4.3

Source: Burda,V.; Festová,J.; Úlovcová,H.; Vojtěch,J. *Přístup mladých lidí ke vzdělávání a jejich profesní uplatnění* (Attitudes of Young People to Education and Their Careers), NÚOV, 2003

tance to 'high level of one's own education'. Respondents in other education categories rated this factor as the fifth, only after 'aptitudes and talent' and 'knowing the right people'.

Although the respondents did not place education as the main factor influencing success in life ([3]), they ranked it among the first half on the list. Most respondents ascribe primary importance to personal qualities, ambitions and the capacity to work hard, which constitute an important condition for making use of the skills acquired through education and training. The survey also points to one positive development, i.e. that the factors mentioned by young respondents to be important for success in life include own efforts including education, and do not include factors such as social background, region where they live, gender, nationality, political views or religious belief.

The reasons why young people did not place education at the top of the scale may become clearer if we consider the data about unemployment and the requirements of employers concerning the educational attainment of their employees. While unemployment clearly decreases along with an increasing level of educational attainment, employers still tend to recruit mostly individuals with secondary education. This makes the CR different from the existing EU member countries, as employment in the CR is still concentrated largely in industry and there is a need for manual occupations. Overall, the respondents realise that a higher level of education may save them from unemployment. However, if they lack high ambitions and willingness to work hard, they will not achieve success and a position corresponding to their education. The reality is that many people must take up jobs for which they are overqualified.

What is it, then, that stimulates young people to achieve high qualifications? The following table presents the most important motivation factors on the basis of the research mentioned above.

It is apparent that the most important factor, regardless of the respondents' level of education, is financial gain. Second by a narrow margin comes the 'interesting job' factor. It is also clear that this factor is more often mentioned by respondents with a higher level of education. The least important motivation factor is family tradition, which the young people probably see as insignificant. The need to satisfy one's desire for knowledge is also at the bottom in terms of

([3]) The respondents were asked to assess the importance of the 13 factors presented in the table according to a five-degree assessment scale (1 = essential, 2 = very important, 3 = important, 4 = not very important, 5 = entirely unimportant). 'I don't know, cannot choose' was also a possible answer. The analysis of the results is based on calculations expressing an average 'mark' on the five-degree scale. The table shows the average rating of each factor and classification according to the level of education. The lowest figures mean the highest importance attributed to the respective factor.

Assessment of study motivation factors ([4]) **Table 3**

What motivates young people to study	The highest level of education achieved (incl. Students)				
	Basic	Upper secondary without *'maturita'*	Upper secondary with *'maturita'*	Tertiary	Total
Need to satisfy one's desire for knowledge	2.4	2.4	2.2	2.1	2.3
Get an interesting job	1.6	1.6	1.5	1.4	1.5
Develop one's talents and capacities	2.2	2.1	1.9	1.8	2.0
Need to get a diploma, 'maturita' certificate	1.8	1.8	1.7	1.8	1.8
Professional development	2.1	2.0	1.9	1.7	1.9
Family tradition	2.5	2.6	2.6	2.4	2.6
Financial gain	1.5	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.4
Interest in a specific discipline	2.1	2.0	1.9	1.7	1.9

Source: Burda,V.; Festová,J.; Úlovcová,H.; Vojtěch,J. *Přístup mladých lidí ke vzdělávání a jejich profesní uplatnění* [Attitudes of young people to education and their careers]. NÚOV, 2003

importance, although it gets more positive rating from people with tertiary education. It is clear that young people with tertiary education, unlike their counterparts in the other education categories, consider additional factors to be important, such as professional development and developing one's talents and capacities.

Changes in the structure of educational pathways

The pursuit of high educational attainment is one of the principal characteristics of the younger generations in the CR. Their intensive interest in education speeded up, after 1989, structural changes in the education system. These changes included reduction of vocational training without 'maturita' (ISCED 3B) and promotion of secondary technical and vocational education leading to 'maturita' (ISCED 3A) with the possibility of continuing into tertiary education. Parents are willing to pay tuition fees for their children, which is a factor that contributed to the establishment of private upper secondary schools providing courses completed by the 'maturita' examination.

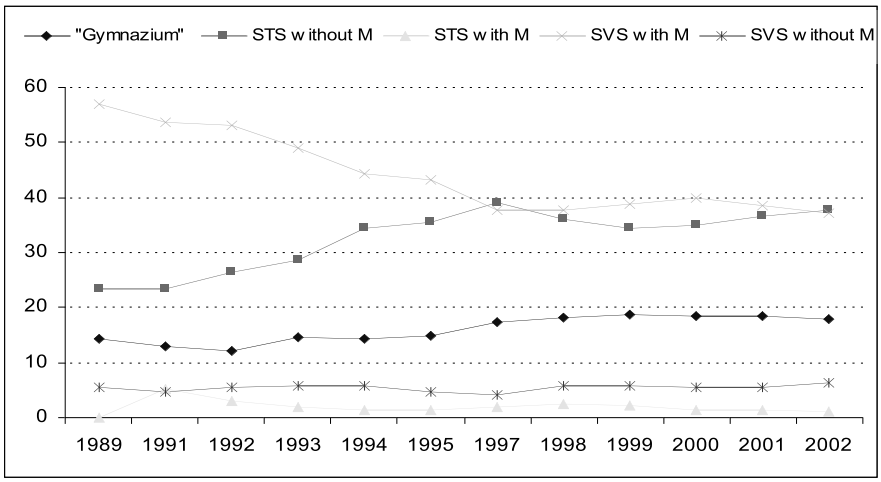
In tertiary education there is continuing social pressure to eliminate the discrepancies between the number of applicants and actual intake. An important role in this respect has been played by so-called 'higher professional schools' (ISCED 5B). Since the mid-1990s they have been a substitute for the very slowly developing provision of Bachelor programmes and made it possible for thousands of young people to achieve 'post-maturita' education. The development of this type of education was highly intensive despite the fact that higher professional schools collect tuition fees. Moreover, the development of private higher education institutions has recently gained in intensity, expanding the capacity of tertiary education. The development in student numbers in ISCED 3 types of education is illustrated in the graph below.

It is clear from the data above that the proportion of students in vocational courses without 'maturita' has decreased significantly, while the proportion of students in VET courses providing full upper secondary education (with 'maturita') has increased. The percentage of students undertaking general upper secondary education has stabilised after a slight increase in the mid-1990s at below 20 %. It is apparent that the choices of the younger generation are affected both by the traditional preferences of the Czech population as well as those of employers, and by the pursuit of higher levels of educational attainment, i.e. at least the 'maturita' level. The final choice of educational pathway is then affected by several other factors.

The dominating reason why students choose vocational training without 'maturita' is their interest in the particular field (in 23 % of cases), or the prospects of a good job or good pay (11 % and 6 % respectively). Other reasons can be summed up as the recognition of inappropriate capacities to complete

([4]) The respondents assessed the motivation factors according to a four-degree scale (1 = definitely yes, 2 = rather yes, 3 = rather not, 5 = definitely not). The table shows the average 'mark' categorised according to the level of education. The lower the figure, the more importance is ascribed to the respective factor.

Proportions of students entering first years of ISCED 3 courses (%) Graph 1



Key: STS with M = secondary technical schools with *'maturita'*
STS without M = secondary technical schools without *'maturita'*
SVS with M = secondary vocational schools with *'maturita'*
SVS without M = secondary vocational schools without *'maturita'*
Note: the year 1996 is not included, since the data are not comparable to other years due to systemic adjustment
Source: Vojtěch, J.; Festová, J. *Vývoj vzdělanostní a oborové struktury žáků ve středním a vyšším vzdělávání v ČR a krajích a postavení mladých lidí na trhu práce 2002/03* [The development of education and field structure in secondary and higher professional education in regions and the position of young people in the labour market], NÚOV, 2003.

a 'maturita' programme (20 %) or a failure in the entrance procedure for a 'maturita' programme (10 %).

A total of 67 % of students entering 'maturita' programmes at secondary technical schools made this choice because they 'wanted to have 'maturita'. This is actually a choice of a higher level of education which facilitates both better employment and access to tertiary education. Other reasons are linked to the interest in the particular field (40 %) and good employment prospects (31 %).

Study programmes at gymnazium are opted for by students who intend to proceed to higher education. The proportion of these students is low in the CR (with the exception of Prague). One of the reasons is that vocational education is traditionally highly respected in the CR and that VET courses with 'maturita' are considered to be equal to academic programmes (i.e. at gymnazium). This is why the CR ranks among the European countries with the highest proportion of young people in secondary VET programmes.

While the 'maturita' examination certificate from general (academic) and vocational education makes it possible to apply for admission to tertiary education, the vocational training certificate from courses without 'maturita' does not faciliate this option. However, the certificate holder may undertake a two-year 'follow-up' course leading to 'maturita' and then continue with his/her studies. In theory this provides for a high degree of vertical transferability in the education system. All students who successfully complete basic school can, regardless of what educational pathway they choose, continue towards higher educational attainment. In practice, however, this opportunity is not fully used because of the selectiveness of the education system and its limited capacity, particularly as regards Bachelor and Master courses.

Educational attainment of parents and children and their wishes

There are clear expectations within the Czech population that the level of educational attainment of children should be higher than that of parents. This is the result of various surveys comparing information about the education of the respondents, their parents and about what education they wish their children to achieve (e.g. Burda et al., 2003). There is a particularly strong interest in tertiary education. Hardly one third of the respondents with basic and vocational education without 'maturita' and less than 10 % of 'maturita' certificate holders would be satisfied with their children achieving secondary education. All the others think their children should have tertiary education (see the bottom line of the tables below).

The following expectations may be inferred from the average data available: vocational education without 'maturita' should be the highest educational attainment of a mere 7 % of the population; 29 % should have 'maturita' from academic programmes leading primarily to tertiary education; and 64 % should have 'maturita' from VET programmes. According to the parents' wishes, only 20 % of the population should lack the opportunity for entering tertiary education, more than 40 % of parents expect their children to undertake Bachelor or higher professional courses and the same percentage goes for Master programmes.

Parents in the Czech Republic expect the education system to provide similar opportunities to those provided by many advanced EU countries. The expectations go beyond the visions set forth in the National

The relationship between the education of the respondent and his/her parents and expected education of the respondent's child **Table 4**

Education of the respondent								
Education of the respondents´ parents	**Basic**	**Vocational**		***Gymnazium***	**Higher professional**	**BACH**	**MAG**	**Total**
		without M	**with M**					
Basic	40	39	20	1	1	0	1	100
Upper secondary without *'maturita'*	12	47	34	3	1	1	2	100
Upper secondary with *'maturita'*	9	17	54	11	1	1	7	100
Tertiary	10	12	30	12	7	4	26	100
Total	**13**	**35**	**38**	**6**	**1**	**1**	**6**	**100**

The relationship between the education of the respondent and his/her parents and expected education of the respondent's child

Expected education of respondents´ child										
Education of the respondent	**Basic**	**Vocational**		***Gymnazium***		**Total**	**No other education at tertiary level**	**Higher professional**	**BACH**	**MAG**
		without M	**with M**	**4 years**	**multi-annual**					
Basic	1	25	58	7	10	100	28	33	11	29
Upper secondary without *'maturita'*	0	11	68	11	10	100	29	35	14	22
Upper secondary with *'maturita'*	0	2	66	13	19	100	8	23	19	50
Tertiary	1	0	44	17	38	100	1	5	14	80
Total	**0**	**7**	**64**	**12**	**17**	**100**	**17**	**26**	**16**	**41**

Source: Burda,V.; Festová,J.; Úlovcová,H.; Vojtěch,J. *Přístup mladých lidí ke vzdělávání a jejich profesní uplatnění* (Attitudes of Young People to Education and Their Careers). NÚOV, 2003
Note:
M = *maturita*
BACH = bachelor degree
MAG = magister degree

Programme for the Development of Education (white paper) ([5]), which envisage an increase in the number of students in higher education to 50 % of the young population, with half of them completing their education with a bachelor degree.

Educational mobility

The difference between these expectations and reality has been proved by an analysis of educational mobility carried out as part of the SIALS ([6]) survey. The likelihood that a son will achieve a higher level of education than his father, or that a daughter will achieve a higher level of education than her mother is decreasing and stagnating respectively over the long term in the CR. This is clear from a comparison of educational mobility of various age groups. The CR ranks among the European countries where this likelihood is the lowest in the youngest generation (up to 35). While an average of 35 % of men in the youngest generation in the countries involved in the SIALS survey (see graph 2) achieved higher education than their parents, the figure was only 26 % in the Czech Republic. The data is not much more favourable as regards Czech women in the age group up to 35, as only 31 % of them had a higher level of education than their mothers as compared to the other countries' average of 45 %.

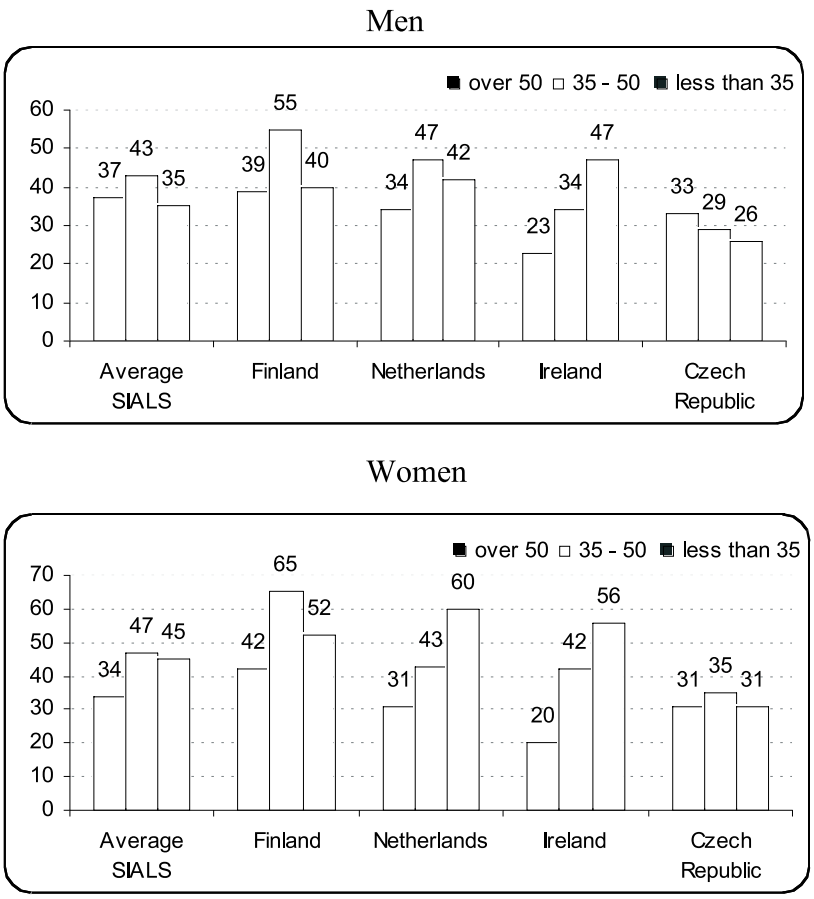
Low level of upward educational mobility has unfavourable effects on the degree to which human capital in various generations is being used and the development of talents that need not be dependent on cultural and educational background of the family environment.

Research carried out in 1996 and 1997 (Průša, Průšová, 1997) has revealed that the dominating factor affecting educational attainment of children is their parents' level of education (this explains 27 % of the variance). At the same time, the influence of other factors (cultural, economic) was mediated by

([5]) National programme for the development of education (white paper), Prague, MoEYS, 2001.

([6]) International adult literacy survey, 1998.

Upward educational mobility in age groups up to 35, 35 - 50 and over 50 **Graph 2**



Source: OECD, Education at a glance, 2000

the parents' education. This confirms the high level of dependence of the children's educational path on the type of family they come from ([7]) Children at the top of the scale are 20 times more likely to study at tertiary level than the children at the bottom of the scale. Financial considerations do not constitute the greatest barrier in access to education. This is evident from the fact that whereas among the group of children in higher education there are great differences between the groups of families with various levels of education, within those groups with a certain level of education, family income does not play a substantial role.

Weak inter-generational mobility in the level of education is rooted in the approaches taken by the Czech education system at all its levels. The school system has a tendency to reproduce inequality for those from low cultural and educational backgrounds rather than levelling it. The reasons include the nature of admission proceedings to secondary schools and higher education institutions and instruction focused on a one-way imparting of knowledge that is of an encyclopaedic nature. This requires more attention to learning at home and favours children from better-educated and more cultured families. The TIMSS ([8]) has revealed that the differences in test results of children as young as thirteen can largely be attributed to the varying levels of education of their parents ([9]). The high level of selectivity in the Czech education system is increased by insufficient capacity in higher education institutions. All these factors stiffen competition in which children from less educated families lose out.

Attitudes to continuing education and training

In view of low inter-generational mobility and limited access to tertiary education one could expect a high interest in continuing education and training. However, the rate of participation in continuing education is relatively low in the CR (around 27 %). It is higher than in other Central and Eastern European countries (Hungary has 18 % and Poland 14 %), but as little as half that in some Member States (e.g. 55 % in Finland, 42 % in Germany) ([10]). As in other countries, the intensity of interest in continuing education may be attributed to the individual's education. However, the differences are more striking in the CR, as individuals with the lowest qualifications (lower secondary education) who face the most adverse response in the labour market show far lower interest in education than their counterparts in the EU.

The willingness to continue with education and training may also be seen in the degree of importance individuals assign to what they learned at school and to what they gained from practice and further training. As research revealed (SIALS, 1998), Czechs ascribe the same importance to continuing education and skills acquired from practice as they do to the knowledge obtained at school. However, for the labour force in EU countries, continuing education is more beneficial than the knowledge learned at school. Nearly 27 % of Czech respondents in the ISSP survey - the largest figure of all countries under review - stated that what they learned in initial education is more important than what they learned from practice and through further training. This implies that, unlike other nations, Czechs do not consider the benefits of continuing education to be so important.

([7]) As part of the survey families were divided into six types based on major factors related to family background: a static manual workers' family, ambitious manual workers' family, non-developed medium family, stable medium class family, businessmen's family, professionals' family.

([8]) TIMSS

([9]) This accounts for 38 % of the variance. In EU countries the differences oscillate between 20 and 30 %.

([10]) Source: Education at a Glance, OECD, 2002 - the data from International adult literacy survey 1994-98.

What is Important for Employment **Table 5**

	Continuing training and practice more important	Both of the same importance	School more important
France	64.26	31.08	4.65
Italy	56.72	31.30	11.97
Sweden	55.95	35.72	8.32
Slovenia	52.44	37.97	9.59
Norway	51.40	38.45	10.16
Germany (former FRG)	50.98	38.16	10.86
Germany (former GDR)	47.13	42.15	10.73
Cyprus	40.89	47.70	11.41
Spain	32.49	51.89	15.62
Portugal	32.38	50.92	16.70
Hungary	28.30	59.00	12.70
Czech Republic	24.07	49.25	26.68

Source: International social survey programme (ISSP), 1997

The fact that initial education is considered to affect professional development more than continuing education is also reflected in young people's attitudes to training while in employment. Surveys conducted among the young labour force (Burda et al., 2003) have revealed that, although the importance of continuing education for work performance is generally acknowledged (over a half of respondents were of this opinion), in reality only a modest proportion of the labour force takes part in it. Three quarters of the young economically active population are not involved in further education at all or only sporadically. The remaining 25 % spends less than 12 hours per year to further education and training - i.e. not even an hour per month.

There is a low level of personal motivation to learn further, as two thirds of young people undergoing continuing education do so at the instigation of their employer. The passive approach to continuing to upgrade knowledge and skills is apparent from the reasons stated for non-participation. A large proportion of young people believe that continuing education is not necessary (almost 13 % of people with tertiary education and over 32 % of vocational certificate holders), or explain they are not involved since they have not been offered the opportunity (41 % of individuals with tertiary education and 51 % of people with basic education). There is stronger motivation among people with a higher level of educational attainment and there are also some differences in favour of women. Groups from the population with a higher level of education show both higher numbers participating in continuing education and training and also devote more time to these activities. This appears to aggravate the differences between the various categories of the population classified in terms of education. Moreover, it may be confirmed that those who believe their knowledge and skills are appropriate are those who most need to enhance them.

Conclusions

The attitudes of the Czech population to education appear to be very positive, despite the lower than average views of education as a factor contributing to success in life. This may be illustrated from the substantial increase in the rate of participation in initial education in the 1990s - in spite of the limited capacity of tertiary education - and also from the changed structure of educational pathways. Young people decisively tend to prefer secondary education with 'maturita' (ISCED 3A) facilitating transfer to the tertiary level over vocational training without 'maturita' (ISCED 3B).

Moreover, the Czech population overly appreciates the value of initial education and its importance in terms of employment prospects; conversely, it underestimates continuing education and training. Evidence of this is low individual motivation and a low rate of participation in continuing training.

Perception of the importance of continuing education for work performance / Attitudes of economically active young population according to educational attainment **Table 6**

In terms of work performance continuing education is:	Level of education			
	Basic	Upper secondary without 'maturita'	Upper secondary with 'maturita'	Tertiary
Definitely essential	41.5	8.9	26.7	48.6
Rather essential	41.5	31.3	38.8	41.6
Rather non-essential	33	44.3	26.1	9.7
Definitely non-essential	25.4	15.5	8.4	9.7

Note: In view of the low figures the positive answers were summed up for the basic education category and the negative answers for the tertiary education category.

One of the reasons is that employers do not recognise certificates from continuing training courses to be equal to those from initial education, which reduces the prestige of continuing training. Improving the standards and the rate of participation in lifelong learning and interlinking initial and continuing education is a major task for Czech education policy.

The Czech education system is very selective, which can be seen from the low level of upward educational mobility and the demonstrable impact of cultural and social family background on school performance. Parents hold strong expectations that their children will achieve a higher level of education compared to them. To ensure that these expectations will be fulfilled, tertiary education, in particular, must be substantially expanded and various qualitative measures must be taken to alleviate barriers to equal access to education.

Key words

Level of education,
vocational education,
continuing education,
motivation,
attitude,
education participation rate

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